# The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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## THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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## *BEAR AND FORBEAR.*

*"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."*

When harsh words, unkindly spoken,
Chill thee like November's rain,
Go and find some sad heart, broken,
And with kind words ease its pain.

When temptations fierce would smother
In thy soul the Father's light,
Go and find some weaker brother,
Lead his erring feet aright.

When thy heart is crushed with sorrow,
Wildly throbbing in its pain,
Help some sadder heart, and borrow
Balm to glad thine own again.

If thy burden makes thee weary
With its heavy load of care,
Find some heart with days more dreary,
Help that soul its load to bear.

"Bear ye one another's burden,"
Sorrows then will all grow light,
Joy shall surely be thy guerdon,—
God's great love will make it right.

Bear ye, then, for one another.
He who once our burden bore
Framed the law: obeyed, my brother,
Peace it giveth evermore.

—*Julian S. Cutler.*

## *THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD.*

*1 Cor. x. 13.— "God is faithful."*

Religion has its root in conscious need, and in a sense of dependence from which there is no escape. Our faith, in all its forms, is built upon our necessities. The rapture of the saint and the wail of the sinner spring from the consciousness that, no matter to what heights he rises or to what depths he descends, man feels that he cannot stand alone, but must lean upon another life that is complete in itself. This is the first instinct of childhood, and is the sole stay of maturity. It is the firmest staff upon which age can lean when all other supports fail. It is the burden of our helplessness. It is the glory of our strength. We realize it every time we think of our nature and its destiny. It comes to us in our hours of toil and in our days of rest. We feel it in our joy: we cannot escape it in our suffering. It is with us in the crowd: it is our companion in solitude. There is no instinct so universal, and there is none so urgent. It is the most restless of our desires, and knows no peace until it is rooted and fixed in the Eternal.

Not only do men know God and experience the reality of his presence, but the knowledge and the experience have grown from more to more. The Bible, and, indeed, all religious literature, illustrate the slow development in the human mind of the prevailing thought and character of God. It tells the story of progress, not merely as to the intellectual conception of Deity, but as to the moral character. Thought and experience have expanded theology, even in spite of the theologians. Every department of research has been put under contribution to enlarge and beautify the thought of God and of his providence.

Now what is, or ought to be, the practical effect upon the human character of this momentous truth? What is the result which,

in the nature of things, it is calculated to have upon the minds of all who really believe it? It is not an inoperative opinion. It is germinal and prolific, and cannot fail to produce its effect upon character.

To know that we come from the infinite God and dwell in him and return to him; to be assured that all our lives lie within the circle of perfect wisdom and goodness; to feel, without any doubt or misgiving, that Eternal Righteousness prevails in this world and in all worlds; to rest in the faith that, "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him,"—is knowledge that adds immensely to the stability, the serenity, the worth of our lives. These are convictions which anchor the soul in tempest, and stay it as nothing else can in its vicissitudes and conflicts. They are the great certainties amid so much that is uncertain, the "everlasting yea" that quells our doubts and fears.

Who can estimate the value of such convictions? They are the unfailing sources of intellectual repose, the sure guarantees of moral stability, the fruition of every high desire. Oh, the immeasurable restfulness which comes from the deep conviction that each life has the life of God within it and around it, and is not part of a whirling chaos with no divineness at its centre!

Amid all other thoughts of God which move us there is none equal to this, that he is a faithful Creator. There is nothing to which we cling so tenaciously, as to something we cannot let go, as the conviction which Browning's familiar lines so forcibly express, —

> "God's in his heaven :
> All's right with the world."

When we are perplexed and troubled, as we too often are, feeling the weary weight of life's unintelligible mystery, it strengthens and comforts us to be able to fly to "the secret place of the Most High" and abide under the shadow of the Almighty. It is like a cleft in the rock, like a well in the desert. We rest in the thought of God's faithfulness when we cannot find rest elsewhere. The inflexible character of God is our refuge. In that we repose, upon that we rely, as the supreme certainty amid all uncertainties. Yet what do we mean when we speak of the character of God? A man's character is expressed in his conduct. The character of God is revealed in his works. In much of what we call nature we discern a moral quality and purpose. Even where we cannot always trace the connection, we associate goodness with power, beneficence with omnipotence; but the characteristic feature in the universe is its steadfastness. Order prevails everywhere. The invariableness of the laws and processes of nature is something to be counted upon. The power with which we have to deal, and from which there is no escape, is not arbitrary and capricious, but faithful and unchangeable. Every science is built upon the stability of law.

If close observation of nature, and of man's place in it, has taught us one truth more than another, it is surely this: that everywhere we discern the activity of a power, not brute and blind and unintelligent, acting without knowledge and purpose, but a force that is rational, selective, working by means well understood, and to ends which are meant and made to take place. Throughout astronomic spaces and geological periods, in the relations of atoms and the structure of systems and the sweep of mechanical forces, we recognize the existence and sovereignty, not only of order, but of intellect and righteousness. Atom is held to atom and star to star in a tissue of thought-created and intellectual relations. If we look at the domain of organic life,—at a plant, an insect, an animal, a man,—we observe everywhere the same co-ordinating and controlling energy by which each thing lives and grows after its kind and fulfils the law of its being, and which limits on every hand the possibility of wide variation from the normal type. So that in the evolution of organic life, from the lichen to the palm and from the mollusk to the man, we see throughout a flow of intelligent force, a tide of advancing power, which makes for wisdom, beauty, and righteousness, disclosing from first to last the existence and action of a constant, forecasting, progressive, and realizing purpose, which we find nowhere else, except in a wise and beneficent personality.

From these and similar considerations we may therefore learn the lesson of an unshaken faith. They do not answer all our perplexities, for that would hardly serve the divine purpose in our lives. They do not

solve all our enigmas. They still leave very much for us to brood over about God and the ways of his providence. But they set us in the right direction, and explain many events and circumstances not otherwise explicable. Of one thing they make us sure: that there is no persistent and permanent power of evil in the universe or in our lives, no power that was created for evil, and that delights in it. What seems so arises from our defective vision and imperfect knowledge, and the number of things which have hitherto worn that aspect is slowly diminishing.

Are you perplexed, then, with doubts which threaten to cloud your intellect and chill your heart and paralyze your will? Take courage and cleave closely to the truth of which you are assured, and more light will come, and brighter, if only you have patience to wait for it. Are you sorely disappointed with your lot? Do you often drop into a dull and cheerless pessimism, which, while it lasts, takes every beam of sunshine out of your heart? Then try to look at your weariness and soreness in the light of the truth that God will not leave you nor forsake you, he will not afflict you without purpose, he will not distress you beyond measure.

No life, however prosperous and serene, is without its doubts and fears and sad misgivings. The sky above us is not always clear. Shadow and storm often shut the sunlight from our view, and nothing but absolute confidence in the fidelity and goodness of God will hold us loyal and trustful when for a time the light of life is veiled in cloud. What we need more than anything else in our disappointment, sorrow, and loss, is the deep assurance that all life is and must be in the care and keeping of One who is too wise to err, too just and good ever to be unkind. That conviction will enable us to say with the Psalmist, and to say it as though we meant it: "The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?" That, and that alone, suffices to change all our painful experiences into benedictions and all our sorrows into angels of hope. Religion is the power that transforms and transfigures life, and puts a beneficent meaning into its infelicities.

"The feeble hands, and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God's right hand in that darkness,
And are lifted up and strengthened."

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## *THE STILL HOUR.*

When on my day of life the night is falling,
And, in the winds from unsunned spaces blown,
I hear far voices out of darkness calling
My feet to paths unknown,

Thou who hast made my home of life so pleasant,
Leave not its tenant when its walls decay;
O Love Divine, O Helper ever present,
Be Thou my strength and stay!

Be near me when all else is from me drifting,—
Earth, sky, home's pictures, days of shade and shine,
And kindly faces to my own uplifting
The love which answers mine.

I have but Thee, my Father! let Thy spirit
Be with me then to comfort and uphold;
No gate of pearl, no branch of palm I merit,
Nor street of shining gold.

Suffice it if — my good and ill unreckoned,
And both forgiven through Thy abounding grace —
I find myself by hands familiar beckoned
Unto my fitting place.

Some humble door among Thy many mansions,
Some sheltering shade where sin and striving cease,
And flows forever through heaven's green expansions
The river of Thy peace.

There, from the music round about me stealing,
I fain would learn the new and holy song,
And find at last, beneath Thy trees of healing,
The life for which I long.

— *John G. Whittier.*

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There is a child asleep amid summer scenery, shut into a dream-world of his own. In that dream-world he sees a variety of pleasing objects, frolics with his companions, and plashes in the brooks; and so delighted is he that his cheeks are aglow and a smile is playing around his lips. It is all real to him, and he knows for a time of no other existence. But all the while he is in a world still more bright and objective, of which he has not the faintest cognizance. The fragrance of flowers is wafted over him unperceived, and the warble of birds falls

unheeded upon his ear. He is in two worlds at once,—consciously in one, unconsciously in the other. How will you transfer his relations from the first to the last? How will you bring him from the dream-world into the real one? Not by taking him on a journey through space, but simply by waking him up. Close one set of senses and open another, and the whole work is done. One world vanishes, and another opens upon him its endless range of objects. So it is with us. We dream now: we shall wake anon, and wonder at the fields which lie about us and the skies that bend over us.—*Edmund H. Sears.*

## THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[*Send all matter for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.*]

BEFORE WRITING TO ASK FOR BOOKS, DO NOT FAIL TO READ THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.

3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'Black Beauty,'" or whatever the book may be; not, "I have received *that book.*" This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise, she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

N.B.— Do not send books to the Book Club. Send only the *offer* to the club. To send the *book* involves packing it *twice* and paying postage *twice*, where once would suffice.

Those who offer books frequently receive notes, saying, "Shall I return you this book, or keep it, or pass it on?" *Unless otherwise stated, all* books offered in this department are *given*, and the postage paid.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking, "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it: else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

Please write only on one side of the paper in sending lists or letters to the secretary.

### OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

The Second Church Branch of the Women's Alliance, Salem, offers the following books. Address Miss Decker, 4 Mt. Vernon Street, Salem. "Miss Carew," Amelia Edwards; "Child Life in Italy"; "Madame Thérèse; or, The Volunteers of '92," Erckmann-Chatrian; "In Gypsyland," E. R. Pennell; "Conflict between Religion and Science," Draper; "The Ivory Gate," Walter Besant; "The Inn of the Guardian Angel"; "Ships that pass in the Night"; "Whittaker's Almanac for 1893"; "At Tuyter's," G. B. Durgin; seven copies *Household Companion;* a small pamphlet of receipts; Memoir Thomas Carlyle, Froude; Memoir Hon. Samuel Howe, Rev. Rufus Ellis; Memoir Rachel Ford, E. J. Williams; "The Fall," S. K. Lothrop; "The Neighbors," Fredrika Bremer.

*Magazines.*

Odd numbers of the *Radical, Galaxy, Overland Monthly, Cosmopolitan, Manhattan* (Ill.) *Magazine, Atlantic Monthly, Eclectic, Quarterly Journal of Economics, Unitarian Review, Monthly Religious Magazine, Ladies' Home Journal, Lippincott, Littell.*

Mr. William F. English, East Windsor, Conn., offers "Evolution and the Immanent God."

### REQUESTS.

[*Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.*]

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.)

I should like to receive any books bearing on evolution, philosophy, physiology, hygiene, esoteric, good health, etc., and to pass them on, as finished. C. D. Whitcomb, 182 Henry Street, Detroit, Michigan.

Mrs. R. A. Danskin, Ragan, Nebraska, will be glad to receive "Gospel Hymns, No. 5," and "St Elmo."

Mrs. Sallie Walting, Glade Creek, Tennessee, asks for magazines or any light reading.

Mrs. Anna Ledbetter, Cases, Rockingham County, North Carolina, asks for Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress."

I will ask for the Life of Christ, also for Barnes's "Brief History of the United States," and any other good reading that you may send me. We are not able to afford any books, and would be much obliged if you would send some reading. Address Mrs. Minnie B. McJenkin, Glade Creek, Tennessee.

Can any one send me books, magazines, and papers for a free library? We are striving to get all the books that we can. Any help will be appreciated. Send all mail to Malinda, Georgia, and express to Winder, Georgia. Albin I. Lyle.

Books and papers suitable for a Sunday-school will be gladly received and put to good use by Annie Gill, Elgin, Kootenal County, Idaho.

Mrs. Jane McGehee, Vulcan, Orange County, Virginia, is not able to buy reading, and would be glad to receive any magazines.

Mr. R. J. Spaulding, Chuckaluck, Tennessee, asks that some magazines be sent him.

Mrs. Maggie Amos, Sandy Ridge, North Carolina, asks for reading for herself and two little girls, Mabel and Florence, ages ten and eight years.

Mrs. Sarah B. Thornton, Filley, Nebraska, asks for reading matter, which will be distributed to several in the country about her who will be very thankful to receive it.

Mrs. J. M. Fisher, Pleasant Point, Texas, the mother of six girls and two boys, between the ages of two and eighteen, finds it difficult to provide them with suitable reading, and asks that such be sent her.

Will some one, after reading, kindly send copies of the *Atlantic Monthly* — even old ones gladly received — to Miss F. M. Robbins, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois?

## *BIOGRAPHY.*

### ELIZABETH FRY.

In these days, when human sympathy reaches out to relieve misery of any description, it is hard to appreciate the tremendous obstacles that in the early part of this century lay in the way of certain strong-hearted and determined philanthropists who started those reforms that have become such a feature in the life of this nineteenth century. In comparing our times with those of nearly a hundred years ago, one of the most striking differences is the slight value then held of human life. Not but that great deeds had been done and noble lives lived to improve humanity in various forms, chief among them that of John Howard. His life, devoted to prison reform, ended in 1790; and, though some years elapsed before she took up the work, none stands nearer to him in that great reform than Elizabeth Fry.

Her parents, John and Catherine Gurney, both came of distinguished Quaker families, and, being in comfortable circumstances and holding liberal religious views, gave their children unusual worldly advantages. Their third daughter, Elizabeth, the subject of this sketch, was born in Norwich, England, May 21, 1780, though the greater part of her unmarried life was spent at her father's estate of Earlham, whither the family moved in 1786. The family ties seem to have been unusually strong; and throughout Mrs. Fry's journal, both before and after her marriage, are allusions that picture a peaceful, happy home, where religion played an important part, but not to the exclusion of innocent amusement. Mrs. Gurney was a particularly lovely character, an accomplished, intellectual woman, devoted to her children, whose education she supervised, and herself teaching them many things,— noticeably, a great love of nature, which remained with them in after life. Unfortunately, she died when her daughter Elizabeth was but twelve.

At the age of seventeen, influenced by the preaching of William Savary, an American friend, Elizabeth Gurney from being a very liberal became a strict Quaker, the change, however, making no difference in her family relations. In 1800 her home was changed to London by her happy marriage with Joseph Fry, a strict Quaker like herself. During the years that followed, bringing the responsibilities of rearing a large family of children, Mrs. Fry never neglected her domestic duties as she became interested in the work that has made her famous.

To understand the situation, it is well to see what was the treatment of criminals. Till the time of John Howard no thought of the reform of criminals was seriously entertained; and, with capital punishment the recognized penalty for two hundred crimes and transportation for others, the prisons were regarded as little more than places of detention. Under no higher control than the local authorities, these were scarcely better than dens of the most frightful description, where the wretched inmates were herded together in an atmosphere both of physical and moral pestilence,— men and women, old and young, the worst criminals and petty offenders. With no adequate provision for cleanliness or decency, the prisoners dependent for sufficient food on charity and the favor of jailers too often brutal and incompetent, crime increased rather than was checked, and frightful epidemics of "jail fever" spoke for the sanitary condition of the prisons.

If, at the end of a long-delayed trial, the death penalty was escaped and the sentence of transportation pronounced, the malefactors were crowded into ships to endure greater horrors than on land, and sent across the seas to enter virtual slavery, permanent or temporary, according to sentence. This idea of transportation was not without humane intent,— to give new surroundings and a chance to begin life again; but no provision for this end was made other than to sell the criminals' labor to the highest bidder.

Such was the case when men like Howard, Blackstone, and Eden began to affect the whole system of treating crime. Transportation had ceased for the time, owing to the American Revolution closing North America against such emigration. Australia was still undiscovered; and, with culprits rapidly accumulating and no sufficient places for their maintenance, a serious question appeared.

Aided by the disturbing realization dawning on the public mind that the country was unable to rid itself of such social encumbrances, Howard and his friends were able to have some of their reforms accepted, the most important being embodied in the Act of 1778, that authorized the erection of penitentiaries. This, though not put in immediate effect, deserves remembrance as a radical step of meeting a great social evil face to face instead of evading it as heretofore. It is unnecessary here to describe the great reforms started by Howard, the great ameliorations in the treatment of criminals, the early attempts through work and instruction to rouse their better natures. Unfortunately, after his too early death in 1790, there came a reaction: interest flagged in the work, prison laws were disregarded, and things gradually reverted toward the former evil conditions.

As a religious sect, the Quakers had always gone among the prisons; and at this time, when conditions were intolerable through negligence of prison laws and lack of discipline, they combined their best efforts to regain lost ground and to sweep away the worst abuses.

Mrs. Fry had always been an active member among the Friends, even being accepted as minister in 1811, and as one of that religious sect was drawn into prison work, exercising from the first great control over the women criminals; for it was they who called for her greatest care. In 1817 she established a school for the children and young women at Newgate, then one of the most notorious prisons. At that time mothers were allowed to have their young children with them while in jail, and it was therefore by appealing to their natural feelings that she reached the women when she proposed her school. It succeeded wonderfully, the women themselves eagerly cooperating; for part of the plan was to give them some of the responsibility of the work, even to the selection of a schoolmistress from among their number.

A few months later there was formed, chiefly by Friends, the Association for the Improvement of the Female Prisoners in Newgate, with the object "to provide for the clothing, the instruction, and the employment of the women, to introduce them to a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and to form in them, as much as possible, those habits of order, sobriety, and industry, which may render them docile and peaceable while in prison, and respectable when they leave it." The prison authorities readily gave their assent to the plan, though doubting its practicability; but that was so quickly demonstrated, and the utter change in the prisoners so marked, that a committee

of aldermen on the city jails passed a vote of thanks to Mrs. Fry and her companions, requesting them at the same time to continue the work. Certain spasmodic attempts that came to naught had been previously attempted by the authorities, to bring about order and decency among these women. In this new system a prominent feature was the chance offered to all to earn responsibility and self-respect,—treatment that brought forth a quick response. For work and instruction these women, now clean and decently clothed, were formed into small groups, each under a monitor of their own number who was chosen by themselves. The regulations, while simple, were rigidly enforced, all the prisoners showing a wonderful respect for them, surprising in those who a few weeks before were little better than wild beasts.

Not only was the prison thus improved, but these unfortunate beings, in the majority of cases, carried with them, on regaining liberty, the better habits and impulses learned from Mrs. Fry and her devoted associates. Public attention was quickly drawn to the great home reform at work, and soon all over the country the result was the springing up of similar associations and the introduction of more enlightened methods in treating criminals.

From this time Mrs. Fry was constantly interested in this great work, though never in all her busy life placing it before her home duties. Journeying through the kingdom at different times to examine other prisons, her singleness of purpose and good judgment were everywhere acknowledged, and many of her recommendations accepted, such as classification of prisoners, and matrons placed in charge of women convicts.

Not the prisons alone received her attention. She soon used her influence for those criminals who were transported to Australia, by seeing to the adoption of certain rules and conditions on shipboard that had proved their value in the prisons, and also by awakening public interest in the fate awaiting the women on landing. For years these poor creatures — often desirous of leading decent lives in their new surroundings—were subjected to the awful moral dangers and temptations that immediately assailed them on reaching the new land, where they had no home, friends, money, or employment.

There was no branch of work for improving humanity to which Mrs. Fry did not extend her interest and, in as many cases as possible, her care. Her influence had spread throughout Europe, and her correspondence and intimate knowledge of kindred subjects in those countries were constantly increasing.

In the midst of these varied occupations there came a year of personal adversity to Mrs. Fry. In 1828 several near relatives died, her husband met with business reverses, and her health, never robust, failed for the time. But the work begun was on such a firm base that it continued until she recovered. Legislative reforms began, new prisons were being built on plans in keeping with the new ideas, and Prison Discipline Societies were being formed. Everywhere, both in and outside of England, was growing a popular feeling of responsibility toward the less fortunate of the human family,—the sick, the insane, the pauper, and criminal classes. Perhaps the most familiar examples we have of the old order of things are certain scenes in Dickens's works.

In her different journeys Mrs. Fry had become much interested in classes of men who, from their occupations, lead lives of great solitude. To her is due the establishment of libraries for the coast guards, the seamen, and the shepherds of Salisbury Plain.

In 1838, accompanied by her husband and several friends, she journeyed to France to examine prison systems in that country. Already well known by her work, she found and made many friends, receiving a cordial welcome wherever she went. The next year she repeated the visit; and, being given a permit to enter any prison, she made an extensive tour, this time visiting hospitals as well. The trip was extended; and, before returning home, she and her party went to Switzerland and part of Germany, examining prisons and hospitals.

Her next two journeys were to places new to her,— Belgium, Holland, Denmark, and Prussia,—during which she came in contact with all classes of people, from royalty to peasantry,—to each and all the same clear-headed, large-hearted philanthropist. Her health was seriously impaired at the end of the last trip, but she sufficiently recovered to revisit France in 1843. That was the

last attempt of the sort, the only wonder being that her strength had not completely failed before under the great exertions due to her busy life. Returning home to her family, she gradually failed physically, but, with mental faculties unimpaired, kept in touch with those great works which are connected with her name until her peaceful death, Oct. 13, 1845.

## THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

*Contributions for this department may be sent to Mrs. J. S. Howe, Chestnut Street, Brookline, Mass.*

Now, in the family, the child sees the parents and other members of the family at work, producing, doing something. The same he notices with adults generally in life and in those active interests with which his family is concerned. Consequently, the child, at this stage, would like himself to represent what he sees. He would like to represent—and tries to do so—all he sees his parents and other adults do, and represent in work all which he thus sees represented by human power and human skill.

What formerly the child did only for the sake of activity, the boy now does for the sake of the result, or product, of his activity. The child's instinct of activity has in the boy become a formative instinct; and this occupies the whole outward life, the outward manifestation of boy life, at this period.

How cheerfully and eagerly the boy and the girl at this age begin to share the work of father and mother,—not the easy work, indeed, but the difficult work, calling for strength and labor!

Be cautious, be careful and thoughtful at this point, O parents! You can here at one blow destroy, at least for a long time, the instinct of formative activity in your children, if you repel their help as childish, useless, of little avail, or even as a hindrance.

Do not let the urgency of your business tempt you to say, "Go away: you only hinder me," or "I am in a hurry: leave me alone." Boys and girls are thus disturbed in their inner activity. They see themselves shut out from the whole with which they felt themselves so intimately united. Their inner power is aroused; but they see themselves alone, and do not know what to do with the aroused power. Nay, it becomes a burden to them; and they become fretful and indolent.

After a third rebuff of this character, scarcely any child will again propose to help and share the work. He becomes fretful and dull, even when he sees his parents engaged in work which he might share. Who has not later on heard the parents of such children complain, "When this boy [or girl] was small, and could not help, he busied himself about everything: now that he knows something and is strong enough, he does not want to do anything?"

Just so! In accordance with the nature of the spiritual principle working in man, as yet unconsciously and unrecognized, the first utterances of the instinct of activity, of the formative instinct, come without any effort on his part, and even against his will, as indeed happens to him even in later life. Now, if this inner impulse to formative activity in man, particularly in early youth, is met by an external obstacle, especially by one like the will of parents,—which cannot be set aside,—the inner power itself is weakened, and a frequent repetition of this forces it back into complete inactivity.

When the child has been thus disturbed, he does not consider why his help was permissible at one time and not at another time: he chooses that which is more agreeable to his physical nature. He abstains from the activity the more readily and willingly because the will of his parents seems to make it his duty to do so.

The child becomes indolent; that is, spirit and life cease to animate his physical being. The latter becomes a mere body to him, which now he must carry as a burden: whereas, formerly, the sense of power led him to feel his body, not as such, but as the mighty source of the power that filled him.

Therefore, O parents, if you wish your children eventually to help you, foster in them at an early period the instinct of activity, and especially the formative instinct of boyhood, even though it should involve some effort, some sacrifice, on your part. It will repay a hundred-fold, as does good wheat planted in good soil.

Strengthen and develop this instinct; give to your child the highest he now needs; permit him to add his power to your work,—

specially dear to him because it is yours,—so that he may not only gain the consciousness of his power, but learn to appreciate its limitations.

If in his former activity (in childhood) he imitated phases of domestic life, in his present activity (in boyhood) he shares the work of the house,—lifting, pulling, carrying, digging, splitting. The boy wants to try his strength in everything, so that his body may grow strong, that his strength may increase, and that he may know its measure. The son accompanies his father everywhere,—to the field and to the garden, to the shop and to the counting-house, to the forest and to the meadow; in the care of domestic animals and in the making of small articles of household furniture; in the splitting, sawing, and the piling up of wood; in all the work his father's trade or calling involves. Question upon question comes from the lips of the boy thirsting for knowledge,—How? Why? When? What for? Of what?—and every somewhat satisfactory answer opens a new world to the boy. Language comes to him everywhere, in its independence, as a mediator between him and the outer world, bringing him the knowledge for which he thirsts.

At this age the healthy boy, brought up simply and naturally, never evades an obstacle, a difficulty. Nay, he seeks it, and overcomes it.—*The Education of Man, by Friedrich Froebel.*

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How to employ children safely and happily in vacation is a serious question, especially to parents who live in cities or villages. I once heard a benevolent man—who had no children of his own—say he wished his little nephews need not go to school at all. "Why shut children up in schools?" he said. "Let them play about outdoors, and grow strong and hearty. When they are about fourteen or so, they can soon learn enough to get on in the world." This sounds well; but, when examined, is very impracticable. In point of fact there is no climate in the world in which a child can play outdoors always; nor can a child, who is too old to take naps, be always running about, as young children can when they first learn to walk. The bicycle is a great invention, and exploring expeditions on it are the greatest pleasure to both boys and girls; but they cannot be always bicycling. They must have some employment for indoors as well as out.

A child with a real love of reading is blest with a gift which will be a pleasure for life; and, where boys and girls are readers, I would give them a pretty wide latitude in the choice of books, excluding only what is positively harmful. In the biographies of authors and otherwise distinguished men we are almost always told that in childhood they were great readers, reading everything they could lay their hands on.

I am one of the old-fashioned women who believe in making little girls thorough seamstresses; and girls, according to my experience, are easier to employ indoors than boys. For active indoor amusements the tool-bench ranks first. Almost all boys have a natural love of carpentering; and it is best to provide them with real good tools, not the fancy tool boxes sold on purpose for children. There is less danger in the saw and the plane than in the sharp knives boys like to carry; and, even if the boxes and brackets a boy makes are not valuable in themselves, he is training his hand and eye. The printing-press is good. So is the typewriter. The best kinds can be bought cheaply at second hand, to begin on. Almost all young people like to edit a paper. In my early youth I was connected with two literary ventures, which did not live long, but gave pleasure while they lasted. With a typewriter a really pretty newspaper or magazine can be manufactured by the boys and girls of a neighborhood.

Some children, otherwise intelligent, do not seem to care for any occupation which requires planning and real industry. I think the reason often is that their brains are so worked at school that, if they have kept up with their classes, they have no energy left in vacation, and so stand round, "loafing," as it may be called. It would be much better, in my opinion, for their future good, if they studied less, and had a little more time and energy to spare on plans of their own or schemes to help others; but there seems little use in remonstrating against the modern high-pressure school system. L.

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Do not pray for crutches, but for wings.—*Phillips Brooks.*

## *NATURAL HISTORY.*

### THE "TRICKS AND MANNERS" OF A CATBIRD.

In a secluded nook in a certain park many hours of last summer were passed in the absorbing study of the "tricks and manners" of a bird. So well hidden was that delightful spot, so narrow and rough the gate, and so attractive the shaded walk leading away from it that it might have remained a secret to this day, unknown save to birds and squirrels; but a friendly catbird in a moment of confidence led me behind the veil of thick shrubs. I marked well the entrance, and day after day returned. The morning our acquaintance began I had been watching his movements as he flitted about, now running madly across the walk, as though a legion of enemies were after him, now pausing on the edge to see what I would do next, then retiring to a short distance under the trees and having a frolic with last year's leaves, digging into them with great spirit and throwing them far over his head. Suddenly he rose on wing, and flew with tail wide spread across the walk, into an althea bush, where he disappeared.

I was about to pass on, when, fancying I heard a faint twittering in the shrub, I approached quietly till near enough to put my hand on him before I saw him. There he sat on a branch about as high as my head, looking at me very sharply with his intelligent black eyes, but not in the least agitated. I stood still, and he went on with his song. It was a most extraordinary performance,—the sweetest notes, with swelling throat and jerking tail, yet not a note louder than a whisper. I had to listen to catch the sound, although I could touch him where I stood. It was a genuine soliloquy. When he had finished, he flew out on the other side of the bush; and, pushing my way through, I found myself in his nook, a charming sunny spot, running down to the lake.

The catbird has an inquiring mind. Nothing escapes his eye, and everything is of interest to him. After one has won his confidence, to induce him to show himself on the grass, it is only necessary to place there something new,—a bit of paper, a small fruit, or anything unusual. From behind his screen of leaves he sees it, is at once seized with intense curiosity, and, if not afraid, he will almost instantly come down to inspect it. This he does by trying to stab it with his sharp black bill, jumping off the ground and pouncing on it, when it happens to be hard, till one fears he will break his bill. A bit of apple treated by him is full of minute stabs or gashes, like dagger thrusts.

No bird is more graceful than the catbird; and, in spite of his soberness of slate-color and black, none is more beautiful. His plumage may be grave of hue; but it is like satin in sheen and texture, and always in the most perfect order. To see him make his toilet for the night is well worth staying late. For an hour steadily he will plume himself, carefully dressing each feather many times over, combing his head with his claws again and again, and shaking with violent effort every atom of the day's dust from him. Then, when he is all arranged to his mind, he fluffs himself out into a ball, draws one slate-color foot up out of sight into its feather pillow, and is ready for one to say good-night and leave him to his repose.

The catbird loves water, and he plunges into his bath fluttering and spattering, wings and tail and head all hard at work, sprinkling everything for yards around, till, when he steps out, he looks like an animated rag-bag; and the long toilet of the evening is repeated.

But the rarest of all is to see him take a sun-bath, and one is fortunate indeed to catch sight of him. Each particular feather stands on end, even to the small ones on his crown, till he looks twice his usual size, and like a clumsy imitation of a bird made of feathers stuck loosely on a ball. More than this, he leans far over to one side, and lifts his wing, so that the sunshine may penetrate to every part, while his mouth is half open and his eyes closed in ecstasy.

The singing of the catbird is as characteristic as anything else about him. No song of his ever comes from the top of a tall tree, but out of the deepest shade of the thickest shrub his music salutes the ear. It is the most charming of songs, exquisite in quality and of compass and variety. His common chirp as he goes about in the bushes is soft as raindrops plashing into a quiet lake, and his low chatter to his friends has the same

liquid character. But he has harsher notes: he has a sharp "tut, tut," like the robin, and he has the cry from which he is named, which at a little distance somewhat resembles the "mew" of a cat, but closer sounds more like the cry of a young baby. When a catbird stands up three feet from you, not in the least flustered or disturbed, calmly looking you full in the face with both his bright black eyes, not turning his head from side to side in the way common to birds, you recognize in him something like intelligence and reason; and you cannot resist the conviction that he has his opinions, and could express them if you could understand his language.—*Olive Thorne Miller, in Harper's Magazine.*

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FEATHERED PHILOSOPHERS.

Man's kingdom is a bit of ground and his birthright a resting-place on earth's bosom. Out of the ground grow the trees that hang their leaves in the wind to shelter him, the flowers that unfold in the sun, the ferns that deepen the silence in the shadowy by-ways where the lichens trace their cryptograms on the rocks. Above this bit of ground is a scrap of sky holding its rotary star treasure, showing the season's various signs; and on the ground, in the trees, and in the sky, are the birds,—through the heat and in the cold, sociable or remote, one for each thought, one for each mood, one for each passion. A bird for every day, from the ghostly white owl skimming the January meadows, to the humming-bird, that darts roseward in the mid-summer twilight. The birds are more time-true than the flowers, who may be hidden by late snows or cut off by early frosts. To claim the confidence of one feathered brother, to compass his ways and learn his secrets, to fathom his traits and philosophy, to gain recognition from him, is a labor worthy of trial. . . .

In early April two robins came to the leafless vine on the western piazza and began a nest. In the morning snow fell, and in the evening lightning blazed. The birds were discouraged, but after a few days returned and completed their dwelling, and another pair chose a trellis over the foot-path, and still another an evergreen branch by the roadside. All three nests were in plain sight and I watched their comings and goings at intervals from morning until evening. The father and mother alternately covered the eggs and supplied the wants of the nestlings; but at night, if I looked at the nest by the aid of a lantern, the mother alone was sitting, and no peering or shaking of the branches revealed the perch of the father. This seemed a little unusual, as, in the case of others of the same family, the wood thrush and the catbird, I had seen the male perch on the edge of the nest, on a twig near by, or huddling close to the female.

One bright moon-lit June night, chancing to go near the pines in the lonliest part of the garden, a hubbub arose as some night bird flapped in among the branches, and there sounded the rapid "quick! quick!" of alarm from a score or two of robins. But daylight did not reveal a trace of a nest in these pines, and, after watching and debating, I discovered that the birds which congregated there nightly were males, who gathered from sundown until an hour or so after, and roosted while their mates guarded the nests. Bradford Torrey has noted this trait at length, with many interesting details, telling of roosts where the robins troop in nightly by hundreds, from a widely extended region. But this roost was in a garden where there were many passers. They continued roosting in this way until early July, when, joined by their young, they disappeared for a time. . . .

Have you ever noticed the oriole's fleetness of wing, foot, and eye? He is the fiery hang-bird, who, wearing Lord Baltimore's colors, flits about among the sweeping elm branches in May, searching for a wand both strong and supple, where he may safely anchor his sky-cradle. There is much thought required in choosing a location, with a dense leafy spray above it like an umbrella, and no twigs underneath to chafe when the wind rocks.—*"The Friendship of Nature" by Mabel Osgood Wright.*

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The greatest man is he who chooses the right with invincible resolution, who resists the sorest temptations from within and without, who bears the heaviest burdens cheerfully, who is calmest in storms, most fearless under menace and frowns, and whose reliance on truth, on virtue, on God, is most unfaltering.— *William Ellery Channing.*

## AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[*Please send all material for this department to Miss E. D. Chapman, 34 Buckingham Street, Cambridge, Mass.*]

### *Riddles.*

1.

Now, my friends with eyes so bright,
Riddle me, riddle me, riddle me right.
What is the letter that names a bird ?
And one an insect we 've seen and heard?
Tell me the letter good oxen know,
And one we drink when we friendly grow;
One the name of a well-known river,
And one a seed we eat for dinner;
One was seen on our ancestor's head,
And one is seen on a house instead;
A name for you and a name for me,
And one the name of old ocean free.

2.

The flour of England, the fruit of Spain,
Met together in a shower of rain,
Rolled in a napkin and tied with a string.
Come, guess me that, and I'll give you a ring.

3.

What is the opposite of cock-a-doodle-doo?

### *Conundrums.*

1. Why is the pig the most curious of all animals?

2. Why is a washerwoman like a navigator ?

3. Why is an author more free than a monarch?

4. What is the difference between England and Russia?

5. When is an artist a dangerous person ?

### *Charades.*

1.

My *first* appertains to the body of man.
My *second* belongs not to me
Any more than to you; but I've hit on a plan,—
We can claim it between us, you see.
But long to mankind may my uses be vain,
And whole suits of my *total* uncalled for remain.

2.

My *first* may be taken, but need not be shaken;
My *second* is part of your vow;
My *whole* should be taken and very well shaken
At least once a day, you'll allow.

3.

My *first* once made the Romans fear,
My *last* falls soft on lady's ear,
My *whole* delights to chase the deer.
— *From a Century of Charades.*

### *Answers to Puzzles in May Number.*

*Distinguished Authors in Disguise.*

1. Johnson. 2. Goldsmith. 3. Lamb. 4. Hogg. 5. Bacon. 6. Crabbe. 7. Lock. 8. Lockhart. 9. Scott. 10. Sterne. 11. Cobbe. 12. Kipling. 13. Black. 14. White. 15. Gray. 16. Blackmore. 17. Gladstone. 18. Gay.

*Conundrums.*

1. Because the diet of worms did not agree with him.

2. Because they want a will of their own.

3. Time out of mind.

4. In the lapse of Time.

5. Because it is an egress (a negress).

6. Because it is the glory of the night (knight).

7. Because the cat'll eat it.

8. Because it's not of much use without it's tender.

*Enigma.*

Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.

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